AIDS cases in the country

†850. DR. ABHISHEK MANU SINGHVI:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the UNAIDS estimates, released in November, 2007, that there are 33.2 million people living with HIV worldwide, i.e. 16 per cent less as compared to 39.5 million estimated in 2006;

(b) if so, what are the estimated HIV/AIDS cases in the country on 31st December, 2007 as compared to 31st December, 2006;

(c) whether it is a fact that many suspected HIV/AIDS patients really do not know that they are HIV positive; and

(d) the steps being taken to create awareness about this deadly disease?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) the estimated HIV cases in the country at the end of the December 2006 are 2.47 million in comparison to 2.54 million estimated HIV cases by the end of the December, 2005 the estimate for the year 2007 are not available at present.

(c) Yes, Sir. HIV status can be detected only through a blood test. Since the introduction of Counselling and Testing Services in public health facilities in 2001. NACO has so far detected 9.6 lakh persons as HIV positive. During the current year 2007-08, 2.91 lakh HIV positive cases have been detected in these centres.

(d) In order to make people aware about HIV/AIDS and promote safe behaviours, NACO and State AIDS control Societies conducts regular IEC campaigns through mass media and inter-personal communication channel. During these campaigns, the information regarding availability of counseling and testing services is also provided to the community. NACO's programmes "Jeewan Hai Anmol" and "Let Talk AIDS" is aired on 174 AIR stations in 24 languages including the stations in the hilly areas. Special awareness programme through Song & Drama Division and Directorate of Field Publicity are organized in the hilly States were regular mass media presence is low. Besides this, the sensitization of members from Gram Sabhas, Panchayati Raj Institutions, Aanganwadi workers, Self Help Groups and media is also undertaken on a regular basis. A special train (Red Ribbon Express) has been launched on 1st December, 2007 to spared the HIV/AIDS awareness messages in various rural areas.

Spurious medicines

†851. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether it is a fact that not only indigenous but imported drugs could also be spurious;

(b) if so, the action taken against those involved in trading of spurious drugs;

(c) whether it is also a fact that an international racket is involved in spreading the business of spurious drugs alongwith face currency; and

(d) if so, the steps taken to save the common man from the scourage of spurious drugs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) Yes, Sir. The imported drugs could also be spurious.

(b) Under section 27 of the said Act, however, himself or by any person on his behalf manufactures for sale or for distribution, or sells, or stocks or exhibits or offers for sale of distributes any drug deemed to be spurious under section 17-B of the said Act, shall be publishable with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than three years but which may extend to five years and with fine which shall not be less than five thousand rupees. Further, Under section 18 of the said Act, State Licensing Authority is empowered to prohibit the manufacture and sale of spurious drugs.

(c) No specific information has come to notice of the Government.

(d) However, with a view to strengthen the preventive measures in this regard, the Government has introduced the Drugs and Cosmetics (Amendment) Bill, 2005 in the Parliament to provide for more stringent punishment to the offenders.

Extinction of Herbal Plants

852. SHRI B.S. GNANADESIKAN: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that many pharmaceutical companies are exploiting herbal plants for their commercial purposes against the permitted levels;

(b) whether Government is also aware that due to such unabated exploitation of the plants many medicinal plants are now becoming extremely rare;

(c) whether there is any committee to monitor the quantity of the herbs extracted by licenced pharmaceutical companies; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) and (b) There is no such information. However, as per report of study undertaken by National Medicinal Plants Board through Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT), Bangalore about 960 species of medicinal plants are in trade, of which, 178 species are in high demand with annual consumption